

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDE-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-10
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MBFR VIENNA 0155

E O 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR
SUBJ: PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON FRENCH DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE

1. WE NOTE THE REQUEST OF FRENCH AUTHORITIES FOR US REACTIONS TO THE FRENCH DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE.
2. THE US WILL PRESUMABLY TAKE A POSITIVE POSITION TOWARD THE GENERAL FACT THAT FRANCE IS NOW WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN ARMS CONTROL. HOWEVER, FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF WESTERN OBJECTIVES IN MBFR, WE WOULD RECOMMEND CONTINUING A POSITION OF SKEPTICISM TOWARD THAT PORTION OF THE FRENCH DISARMAMENT PROGRAM WHICH CALLS FOR AN ALL-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT LIMITED TO CONVENTIONAL ARMAMENTS.
3. THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF THIS FRENCH PROPOSAL IS DIFFICULT IN THE ABSENCE OF SPECIFICS. TO JUDGE FROM

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REMARKS BY FRENCH OFFICIALS, THE CONFERENCE WOULD IN PRACTICE BE LIMITED TO A PHASED CONSIDERATION OF (A) CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES, INCLUDING ON-SITE OBSERVERS; (B) DATA EXCHANGE; AND (C) REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF CONVENTIONAL OFFENSIVE ARMAMENTS, PERHAPS AIRCRAFT AND TANKS, TO BE CARRIED OUT THROUGH DISBANDING UNITS AND THUS ALSO INVOLVE MANPOWER REDUCTIONS. IT WOULD NOT COVER REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS.

4. WE DOUBT THAT A FORUM OF THIS SIZE WOULD BE ABLE TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH SERIOUS ARMS CONTROL ISSUES.

5. A FUNDAMENTAL ASPECT OF THE FRENCH PROJECT IS THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD NOT BE ON A BLOC-TO-BLOC BASIS BUT SHOULD BE A NEGOTIATION AMONG INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGN PARTICIPANTS. THIS FEATURE IS ESSENTIAL FROM THE FRENCH VIEWPOINT, ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH ARE APPARENTLY PREPARED TO PERMIT COORDINATION OF POSITIONS AMONG MEMBERS OF RESPECTIVE ALLIANCES. THIS FEATURE AND THE SIZE OF THE FORUM WOULD MEAN THAT THE ROLE OF NATO IN THE NEGOTIATION AND IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ANY AGREEMENT WHICH MIGHT BE ACHIEVED, WOULD BE SHARPLY REDUCED.

6. MOREOVER, THE BASIC CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION WOULD MEAN IN TERMS OF PRACTICAL OUTCOME EITHER THAT ARMAMENT REDUCTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE AGREED UPON WOULD BE SYMBOLIC, WITHOUT LIMITATIONS ON RESIDUAL LEVELS, OR THAT INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL LIMITATIONS WOULD BE ESTABLISHED.

7. VIEWED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATO AND WARSAW TREATY FORCES IN THE KEY AREA OF CENTRAL EUROPE COVERED IN MBFR, NATIONAL LIMITATIONS, IF AGREED, WOULD BE DISADVANTAGEOUS FOR NATO. THIS IS BECAUSE THEY WOULD PRESUMABLY FIX THE RIGHT FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE WARSAW TREATY TAKEN CUMULATIVELY, AND THE SOVIET UNION
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INDIVIDUALLY, TO HAVE FAR MORE OF MOST MAJOR ARMAMENTS THAN MEMBERS OF NATO WITH FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. IN SHOURT, MERE ACCEPTANCE OF THIS FRENCH APPROACH APPARENTLY WOULD OF ITSELF OBLIGE THE NATO ALLIES PARTICIPATING IN MBFR TO RELINQUISH BOTH THE OBJECTIVES OF COLLECTIVITY AND OF PARITY WHICH THEY ARE PURSUING IN MBFR AND TO ACCEPT CONTRACTUALIZATION OF EASTERN NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY IN MAJOR ARMAMENTS AND MANPOWER, TOGETHER WITH LIMITATION ON UNITS.

8. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL ARMAMENT AND MANOPWER LIMITATIONS INVOLVED MIGHT BE REJECTED BY THE FRG AND OTHERS ON POLITICAL GROUNDS AS NATIONAL CEILINGS. IF THIS WERE THE CASE, THERE MIGHT BE REDUCTIONS WITHOUT POST-REDUCTION LIMITATIONS. IN THIS CASE, THERE WOULD BE NO ENDURING IMPACT.

9. AS FOR THE REDUCTION METHOD FLOWING FROM THE FRENCH APPROACH, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE ANY REDUCTION APPROACH OTHER THAN EQUAL PERCENTAGES IF THE ALLIANCE TO ALLIANCE FRAMEWORK IS ELIMINATED AND PARTICIPANTS ARE DEALT WITH AS INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGN ENTITIES. EVEN IF THE FRENCH DEPARTED FROM THEIR PRINCIPLE OF TREATING PARTICIPANTS AS INDIVIDUALS AND AGREED TO COMPUTE FORCES ON A BLOC-TO-BLOC BASIS, WITH THE

NEUTRALS CONSIDERED AS A THIRD BLOC, THE RESULT WOULD BE THAT THE NUMERICAL SUPERIORTIES IN FAVOR OF THE WARSAW PACT IN THE AREA COVERED WOULD BE LARGER THAN THAT IN THE MBFR AREA. THE AVOWED FRENCH INTENTION IS TO BRING ABOUT "GREATER EQUILIBRIUM" IN EUROPE. THIS WOULD PRESUMABLY REQUIRE MUCH LARGER REDUCTIONS BY THE USSR THAN BY OTHER PARTICIPANTS. WHAT WOULD BE THE INDUCEMENT FOR SUCH REDUCTIONS AS FAR AS THE SOVIETS ARE CONCERNED? AN INDIVIDUAL CEILING ON GERMAN TANKS, AIRCRAFT AND MANPOWER?

10. AS REGARDS THE EXPANDED GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE ENVISAGED BY THE FRENCH APPROACH, THE SOVIET UNION WILL OPPOSE THE FRENCH CONCEPT THAT THE USSR INCLUDE THE PORTION OF THE SOVIET UNION WEST OF THE URALS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE NEGOTIATION AND THUS BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE DATA ON, REDUCE AND PRESUMABLY LIMIT
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SOVIET ARMAMENTS, UNITS AND MANPOWER ON THAT TERRITORY AND SUBJECT ITS FORCES THERE TO OUTSIDE VERIFICATION. WE SEE

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LITTLE PROSPECT THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD FIND THE PRESENT FRENCH APPROACH TO REDUCTIONS ATTRACTIVE AS LONG AS IT IS APPLIED TO THE SOVIET HOMELAND.

11. THE FRG IS LIKELY TO BE ATTRACTED TO CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH PROPOSAL BECAUSE, AS USNATO POINTS OUT, OF ITS DESIRE TO WIDEN THE AREA OF COVERAGE OF POSSIBLE MEASURES TO COVER SOVIET TERRITORY AND ITS DESIRE TO BRING THE FRENCH INTO ARMS CONTROL TALKS. BUT WE THINK THAT FRG VIEWS WILL ALSO BE AFFECTED BY SOME OF THE CONSIDERATIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE AND THAT THE FRG WILL ULTIMATELY ADOPT A MORE DIFFERENTIATED VIEW, GIVING POSSIBLE SUPPORT TO THE CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURE ASPECT OF THE FRENCH PROPOSAL AND LESS TO THE REDUCTION ASPECT. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE NEUTRALS WILL BE SOMEWHAT MORE FORTH-COMING.

12. IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER FRANCE WILL PERSEVERE WITH THIS
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ASPECT OF ITS NEW DISARMAMENT PROGRAM AFTER THE UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT HAS TAKEN PLACE. IF SO, IN THE LONG RUN, THE FUTURE OF THE FRENCH CONCEPT FOR AN ALL-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT WILL PROBABLY BE DETERMINED LARGELY BY WHETHER THE SOVIETS ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE IDEA AND TO FOLD ASPECTS OF IT INTO THEIR OWN CONCEPT FOR AN ALL-EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE ON THEIR OWN LINES OR ULTIMATELY REJECT IT OUTRIGHT.

13. HENCE, TO THE EXTENT THAT THE FRENCH PERSIST WITH THIS ASPECT OF THEIR DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE, IT WOULD APPEAR TO US THAT ITS PARACTICAL EFFECT MAY BE TO LEND A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SUPPORT TO THE SOVIET CALL FOR AN ALL-EUROPEAN SPECIAL CONSULTATION ON SECURITY ISSUES WHICH, IF IT TOOK PLACE, WOULD IN PRACTICE PROBABLY FOCUS ON CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES APPLIED TO THE HELSINKI CBM AREA.

14. YET, GIVEN THE NATURE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS, AND THE LACK OF VISIBLE MOTIVATION FOR THE SOVIETS TO GO BEYOND THE HELSINKI FRAMEWORK, IF SUCH A CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE, IT IS UNLIKELY TO RESULT IN STABILIZING MEASURE WHICH GO BEYOND HELSINKI-BELGRADE TOWARD MEASURES WITH MORE BITE IN THE SECURITY SENSE.

15. IF IT IS DESIRED TO MOVE TO AN APPROACH BASED ON STABILIZING MEASURES AS A FIRST STAGE, THIS COULD BE DONE IN MBFR TOO. THE CHANCES OF OBTAINING SOVIET AGREEMENT TO MEANINGFUL MEASURES WHICH COULD DEAL WITH EARLY WARNING AND SURPRISE ATTACK WOULD SEEM GREATER IF THEY DO NOT COVER SOVIET TERRITORY.

16. ON THE BASIS OF THE ABOVE, WE SUGGEST THAT THE US

DISCUSS WITH THE FRENCH THE PROBLEMS OUTLINED HERE AND TAKE THE
POSITION THAT IT CONSIDERS THE CHANCES OF REDUCTIONS AND
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LIMITATIONS ON THE BROADER BASIS PROPOSED BY THE FRENCH ARE NOT
LARGE. MOREOVER, IT WISHES TO WAIT TO SEE HOW THE VIENNA
NEGOTIATIONS DEVELOP BEFORE TAKING A MORE DEFINITE POSITION
TOWARD THE FRENCH PROPOSAL. RESOR

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